

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY
4 June 2006

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League that provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

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IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY ODPA SYMPOSIUM THE N3 IS IT BECOMING A DEATH TRAP? EMERGENCIES AROUND THE WORLD GENERAL

HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.060 and/or 3.650MHz. KZN also have a Wednesday evening call-up and meeting on their 2M repeater system with the introduction of an 80M relay on 3.650MHz.

The National Bulletin is read at 12H00 CAT on 7,070MHz. We have had to go back to the old frequency as we are interfering with late bulletins on 7:062MHz. Please watch this space!

The Gauteng North bulletin will probably also change due to the appointment of a new Provincial Director. We await further instructions.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province meets on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The bulletin is distributed to all Provincial Directors for reading on their local repeaters a few days prior to the first Sunday of every month for reading on their local repeaters.

The HAMNET section of the SARL website is open to all amateur radio operators. We decided on this for two reasons, to encourage non League members to join the League and also to encourage newly licensed amateurs to consider joining HAMNET.

Please also note that HAMNET is a voluntary, non profit group of amateurs who use their communication skills to assist and help others in distress during and after disasters. HAMNET forms part of the Constitution of the South African Radio League.

ODPA SYMPOSIUM

On Thursday the 18th of May, the first Symposium took place at Wits University organised by the Office of Disaster Preparedness in Africa ODPA.

The symposium covered the aspects of community beliefs and disasters. This may sound very strange, but attending only to listen and to learn, I did in fact learn quite a bit. To such an extent that I requested that at the next meeting, HAMNET be allowed to give an audio visual presentation on what we are and how we could fit into this organisation.

In short, this whole symposium focused on the how the rural people live and how they perceive the effects of a disaster like floods, fires, earthquakes, famine and so on.

The object was also to listen and learn from the rural people how they overcome problems and how they can be helped to overcome problems in times of need or disasters.

It eventually became a very interesting look at the cultures of various “tribes” around South Africa, but focussed mainly on the Limpopo Province. The guest speakers included not only people from the medical field but also members of communities in affected areas.

Just to give you an example of what was learned from other countries where flooding is common (Bangladesh) and how it can be applied to our country and more specifically to Mozambique. We all remember the flooding that took place a few years ago when the Limpopo came down in flood and South Africa having to send in helicopters to rescue people from tree tops.

The comment from many “tree top” residents “thanks for coming, but what took you so long?”

The answer is quite simple build your houses on stilts! Use the bottom section (with flaps), for normal dry season activities, but when the floods come, raise the flaps and allow the flood waters underneath your house to flow freely.

That may sound strange but it does make a lot of sense!

Climate change is playing havoc with many communities where flooding was never a problem before, but now is a major problem. Also, on the other hand, there are many parts of Africa which are drying up rapidly. I cannot remember the name of the lake in question, but this lake currently is only 5% of its original capacity.

One thing in our favour (South Africa), we are one of only two countries in Africa that have a Disaster Management Act, passed by Parliament. The other country was also a bit of a surprise Ethiopia!

The other thing that came out of this symposium is that people tend to rely too much on Government for financial assistance. Forget it!

Look at Holland as an example!

The Dutch dykes were not built by Government funding, believe it or not! It was built by the people themselves. A thousand years ago, the Dutch started to reclaim the ocean for themselves by doing it on their own.

Today, the Dutch people who live in the reclaimed land, have more power than their own Government and can in fact dictate to Government on issues that affect them.

Is there a message there? I believe so!

Indigenous knowledge has never been documented. However there is now a move afoot to do something about this. The reason is, that in the past, when there were disasters, the people did cope and pass lessons learnt on to their offspring. The ideas now are to capture that information for not only future generations, but also to prepare for future disasters.

My contribution by of way of a questionnaire after the symposium was simply, despite mitigation and ways to overcome them, disasters will continue and even get worse. Allow us (HAMNET) a voluntary group of emergency communicators, to show you how we can assist after emergencies and disasters from a radio communications point of view.

Let s see how this group develops, but I am pleased I attended this symposium.

THE N3 IS IT BECOMING A DEATH TRAP?

With the deterioration of Transnet as a means of transport, trucking has taken on in a big way in South Africa. One only has to look at the trucking business in the USA to see how big this industry really can grow.

But that s the USA. In South Africa however, the market is probably ten thousand times smaller but competition among truckers, is cause for concern.

It eventually boils down to quite a few factors, according to Mr. Ben Deysel s article in a magazine called “Capital Equipment News” thanks to Martin Harper ZS6MSG who brought this to my attention.

The N3 is the aorta of business in Gauteng. When the N3 comes to a standstill, so does the South African Industry and the economy!

This was clearly illustrated about 7 years ago when the van Reenen Pass was blocked for 5 days due to a heavier than usual snowfall.

Recently, over one of the long weekends in April, the N3 again came to a standstill for almost 12 hours due to a major truck accident at Balmoral just north of Harrismith. Traffic was backed up 50 kilometres either way.

Most of the trucking is done at night and according to Mr. Deysel, at night all rules of the road are thrown out the window. This is frightening part.

There are no traffic inspectors on the road at night, speed limits are ignored, overtaking becomes a Russian roulette game, and drivers don t take breaks and on many occasions rest only 4 hours out of a 24 hour shift!

Trucks are not regularly inspected; older trucks are not roadworthy due to improper maintenance due to pressure to get the job done and the cost of new equipment.

Overloading is another problem. The pressure to get that extra load to its destination is often overlooked in older trucks.

So, the next time you travel on our highways, and it's not just the N3, be aware of that truck approaching you, it has a tired driver behind the wheel, it's probably overloaded and not roadworthy and it's an accident about to happen!

Sad but true!

EMERGENCIES AROUND THE WORLD

Last month we had a fair amount of disasters around the world. Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods and Typhoons make up most of the headlines.

China, the Philippines and Vietnam experienced a major typhoon, Tajikistan had mudslides and Afghanistan had floods.

Volcanic eruptions occurred in Indonesia on the Island of Java. Mount Merapi maintained a high level of activity for five consecutive days spewing clouds of hot air into the air and lava down its slopes. The vulcanology office has warned of more eruptions and that the magma dome being created at the top of the volcano may burst and send millions of cubic metres of lava and volcanic rock down its slopes.

Closer to home, on Grande Comoro, the largest of the three islands in the Indian Ocean archipelago, Mount Karthala is colouring the sky red as volcanic activity continues. Initial fears of a full-blown eruption and lava flow have calmed but authorities remain alert.

Finally, the other major story in May was the earthquake in Indonesia on the island of Java. It measured 6.3 on the Richter scale and damaged or destroyed more than 105, 000 homes, 269 schools and caused a tremendous amount of damage to infrastructure. Deaths already exceed the 6000 mark.

Appeals have gone out for relief workers to assist in searching for people trapped under rubble, food and medical aid, blankets, clothing and so on.

Twenty nine local hospitals are stretched to the limit in trying to handle the injured and in many cases people are being treated outside the buildings in fear of another quake which may cause the buildings to collapse.

Hardest hit was the ancient town of Yogyakarta with its old temples and buildings which were severely damaged during the initial quake.

GENERAL

IMPORTANT:-

Just a reminder to all Hamnet groups around the country not to get caught out by not completing the Sports Communication document at least 2 weeks prior to any event.

ICASA has informed us that it is our responsibility to let the League know how many people by name, call sign etc. are going to participate in providing communications. They also require, where applicable a special call sign being used in the event and or frequencies to be used.

Let's not fall foul of the Communications Law!

L A T E F L A S H!

Strategic Planning Session!

I had a call from Graham Hartlett ZS6GJH yesterday indicating that we should plan & organise a Strategic Planning Session as soon as possible.

I have sent out an e-mail to all Provincial Directors and members of my committee but this meeting will be open to all who have an interest in Hamnet.

As soon as I have had a response from my Provincial Directors, more information will be made available. However, people from the coastal areas will be flown up to Johannesburg and I will make my Guest House available at a nominal rate to accommodate some of the coastal people.

This will happen over a weekend, starting on Saturday morning and fly back later that afternoon or evening.

All will be advised as soon as we have a date convenient to all Provincial Directors!

The meeting will obviously be held at the Amateur Radio Centre in Radiokop.

That is all for today. Comments and suggestions to: zs6buu@uskonet.com

More information available on www.sarl.org.za then click on HAMNET in the left hand column for all the details you may need. Bulletin ends.